

CHRONOLOGY OF FORT HARRISON

Terre Haute Star
June 1910

- 1811--Erected by Gen. William Henry Harrison as military base of northwest territory.
- Sept. 4, 1812--Under command of Capt. Zachary Taylor, repulsed attack of Indians.
- 1815--Capt. Taylor succeeded in command by Maj. John T. Chunn.
- 1816--Terre Haute established.
- Oct. 26, 1818--Postoffice moved from Fort Harrison to town of Terre Haute by Curtis Gilbert.
- 1820--Major Chunn succeeded in command by Maj. R. Sturgis, who was last commandant of fort.
- 1822--Fort Harrison abandoned as military post.

DESCRIPTION OF FORT HARRISON

Stockade 150 feet square, with two block houses on west corners, forming outer walls; east side two stories high, with bastions; gate in west side, which was made of soldiers' barracks of strongly built log huts; north side, guard house, stables and sheds for stock; south side, well and magazine.

STAR June 1910
By C.T. Jewett

Secretary John Morton Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution

Second only in historical interest to the "Old Post" at Vincennes, Fort Harrison was even a more strategic point in winning the west from wilderness and the wild man than the settlement taken by Col. George

Rogers Clark. Fort Harrison was the farthest post on the borderland of civilization. It made possible the settlement of the rich Wabash Valley and formed a military base from which Gen. William Henry Harrison was able to strike telling blows against the hostile natives. Without Fort Harrison, Tippecanoe would have been impossible.

Under the sheltering shadow of the Sycamore stockade a village was established. It took the name of Terre Haute. The name was here before the town, because French traders had so designed the beautiful tract of "high prairie" on the east bank of the Wabash.

The importance of the military post encouraged settlers. Indiana still was overrun by cruel red men and many smoking ruins told the tale of ventures some settlers who had established their homes and families too

escape attacks from there
was no disaster. The protection until the
red man had been subdued.

The village grew in importance. The site was beautiful. The climate was invigorating. The soil was fertile. The Wabash River formed a natural commercial connecting link between the frontier settlement and the older states. Finally the village outgrew the old military post. The fort was no longer needed. For 11 years the fort was a garrison for United States soldiers. Within its walls the people of the growing town knew they could find protection from attack.

From a frontier settlement Terre Haute, under the bastions of Fort Harrison, grew to such proportions that the soldiers no longer

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were required. The city made possible by the fort in turn made the military post useless. The weak child of the wilderness became sturdy. It had protection in its own strength.

The life of Fort Harrison extended from 1811, when it was built and garrisoned by Northwest Territory militia, to 1822, when the United States withdrew its last company of regulars. The fort was dismantled and gradually fell into ruin and decay. There now remain only the site on the bluff overlooking the bend in the Wabash and some logs of the old stockade which have been protected in the walls of a residence which marks a part of the historic inclosure.

HARRISON GOES AFTER INDIANS

When Indiana Territory was organized, May 10, 1800, the seat of government was Vincennes. May 13 Gen. William Henry Harrison was appointed Governor. Tecumseh and his brother, the Prophet, formed a confederacy of the Indian tribes to prevent white settlers from acquiring the territory. Governor Harrison was authorized in 1811 to call out the militia of the territory and Boyd's regiment of United States Infantry to suppress the Indian outbreaks. He was directed to proceed against the encampment at Prophet's Town, at the mouth of the Tippecanoe River.

The expedition left Vincennes Sept. 29, 1811. Four days later, while encamped on the east bank of the river two miles north of the Indian village, or Orchard Town, he decided to build a fort. The location appealed to Governor Harrison because it afforded a view of the river for several miles in each direction. Tradition handed down from the French traders tells of a fierce battle between rival Indian

nations whose braves met at this point. By the early French traders the point had been named Bataille. To Orchard Town they had given the name Terre Haute.

While General Harrison was building the fort he received word from friendly Indians of the Delaware and Miami nations of the increased activities of the Shawanees and their confederates under the Prophet. Shawanee Indians approached the fort on the night of Oct. 10 and wounded one of the soldiers who was on guard duty. However, the work was rushed, and the fort was completed Oct. 28, 1811.

Col. James Miller was left in command of a small garrison at the fort, and General Harrison, with a force of 900 men, proceeded against Prophet's Town. The army reached within striking distance of the Indians Nov. 6. Every precaution was taken to guard against surprise and the Indian attack, which was expected, came before daylight the following morning. The fight was a desperate one, but the organized army under General Harrison routed a force greatly superior in numbers. The power of Tecumseh was broken. This was the famous battle of Tippecanoe. The battleground was near the present city of Lafayette.

NEW LAND ATTRACTS SETTLERS

The Tippecanoe campaign served a double purpose. It shattered the influence of the Prophet and opened to settlement the beautiful valley of the Wabash. Soldiers returning to their homes told of the great territory, and soon there was a rush of prospectors and settlers. Naturally the military post attracted many families. The red man had been severely punished, but he was still alive, and it was perilous for pioneer to establish his home too far from fortified settlements.

Less than one year from the time the hero of Tippecanoe erected a fort at the bend of the Wabash the post to which the officers had given his name underwent its baptism of fire. With a garrison weakened by sickness, it was a test of bravery. Blazing logs of the stockade made danger within, while hostile savages lurked in the darkness outside.

Captain Zachary Taylor, popularly known as "Old Rough and Ready," later President of the United States was equal to the occasion. When General Harrison returned from Tippecanoe he left Captain Taylor at Fort Harrison. The garrison was composed of a small detachment of the Seventh Infantry. There was only Captain Taylor's company and this had been reduced by sickness until there were less than a score of able soldiers. Captain Taylor himself was sick in bed, but when he feared trouble he crawled out and directed the defense of the fort. Sheltered in the stockade were nine women and two children whose husbands and fathers also had taken refuge in the fort.

On the afternoon of Sept. 3, 1812, two young men who were working some distance from the stockade, were shot and scalped by the Indians. Captain Taylor gave the warning that an attack might be expected at any time. The guard was increased and all the next day soldiers anxiously awaited signs of savages. After dark, Sept. 4, Indians approached the fort under a flag of truce and said they wanted provisions. They were not permitted to gain admission. The party withdrew and at 11 o'clock that night a general attack was made on the fort. Captain Taylor ordered every man to his post. The Indians set fire to the building and for a time the flames raged fiercely in the southwest blockhouse. Every moment there was danger of the fire reaching the

magazine. Men who fought the flames exposed themselves to the bullets of the savages. Soldiers on the stockade fired at the flashes of the Indians' guns and made it possible for their fellows to carry water to the roof and check the flames. Strong breastworks were hurriedly erected in the burned gap.

FORT WITHSTANDS ATTACK

The battle continued all night but at daybreak the Indians retired. They drove off 70 head of cattle and within sight of the fort slaughtered all the horses and hogs. The Indian loss was never known. The loss to the garrison was two killed and one wounded. Captain Taylor reported that this loss was due to carelessness of the men who exposed themselves without cause.

The two soldiers who were killed became confused while the fire was raging and rushed out of the fort. Later their bodies were found. They had been scalped and horribly mutilated by the red men. The strength of the attacking party could not be learned, but it was several times that of the garrison. According to the report of Captain Taylor the attack was repulsed with but 15 effective men.

With the first sign of danger the women became hysterical. They implored Captain Taylor to prevent a catastrophe. No official report has ever been made of his response, but, according to tradition, he is said to have replied:

"Certainly I will prevent it. I will set fire to the magazine and blow up the fort if I can't whip the red savages."

During the heat of the battle the women proved their true worth. They passed water to the men who were on the roof fighting the flames

in the stockade. Then they turned their attention to moulding bullets for the riflemen. Early settlers told stories of the women actually took positions the bastions and used rifles with telling effect. These women were the first mothers of Vigo. Their sons and daughters were the early builders of Terre Haute.

Although the Indians caused much concern in the neighborhood for two or three years, there were no further general attacks on the fort. The settlers, however, looked to the military for protection as late as 1815. In 1813 the savages massacred a few settlers on Honey Creek. Frequently a man who went too far from his home or got beyond the shelter of the fort was slain by wandering bands of savages. Captain Taylor was on the alert at all times and frequently saved families from the tomahawk and scalping knife. In 1814 two men were drawn away from the fort by gobbling of Indians. They fell into ambush and were shot and scalped. Later two Frenchmen who had been gathering plums reported signs of Indians near the fort. With 10 others they returned to the grove where the Indians were concealed. Five men were killed and one wounded.

POST LOSES IMPORTANCE

Captain Taylor continued in command of Fort Harrison until 1815 when he was relieved by Major John T. Chunn who was commandant until 1820. Major R. Sturgis then took the post and held command until 1822, when the fort was abandoned as a military post. Official records show that the garrison at all times was small. Sometimes additional companies were quartered at the fort. This was true particularly during the time Major Sturgis was in command. The post was a stopping point for United States troops passing from Detroit to the south and east.

Recruits for the garrisons at other posts in the northwest territory also frequently stopped for a day or two at Fort Harrison. In fact the post established by General Harrison for a time was the key to the entire northwest territory.

The palmy days of Fort Harrison are rich in romance and tradition. Many of the first white children of the Wabash Valley were born within the walls of the old stockade. Others who came to the territory with their parents nearly one hundred years ago, grew up to reverence the old logs. Young soldiers of General Harrison's army found helpmates in the daughters of the settlers. They remained to form the substantial citizenship of the infant community. Their children, grand-children and great-grandchildren have kept alive a martial spirit such as is noted in no other city in the country.

Aside from the offices who commanded the post there were some individuals whose names became household property. One of these was "Drummer" Davis. Davis was a deserter from the British army at Detroit. He joined General Harrison, served at the fort as long as it was a military post and then became a citizen of Vigo County. He was one of the 15 effective men during the terrible night of Sept. 4, 1812. His time was divided between beating his drum to encourage his comrades and on the stockades with his trusty rifle. The soldiers said that with Zach Taylor fighting and Davis drumming they could whip all creation.

Zach Taylor went out to become a famous Indian fighter. He was promoted brevet major and dealt telling blows during the Blackhawk war in Illinois in 1832. The people of the United States elevated him to the presidency in 1848.

DRUMMER BECOMES SETTLER

"Drummer" Davis lived and died almost within the walls of the old fort. When quite old he lived with his son-in-law across the river. He was the center of attraction at Fourth of July celebrations and on election days. That he never forgot his comrades is evidenced by stories handed down by the early settlers.

A noticeable turn in the old Durkee Ferry road is credited to have been made in deference to the wishes of the aged drummer. Surveyors who were laying out the road tell of coming on Davis, who was sitting on a slight knoll over which the highway naturally would pass. He halted the men and, to their inquiries, is said to have replied:

"My comrades were buried here. I helped to bury them. The road shall not pass over their graves while I live."

During the early history of Fort Harrison the post was honored by many distinguished visitors. Some of these were prompted to become settlers of Vigo County. Others were prospectors and traders. Terre Haute was laid out in 1816, immediately following a treaty which ceded to the Government large tracts of land. Many of the early settlers were soldiers who had seen service in the Revolutionary War and War of 1812. In lieu of pension or money bounty the Government settled with these men in land warrants. The United States treasury was low, but the Government had rich land which was just as attractive to the pioneers. On such patriotic and sturdy citizens was the community formed.

One of the early settlers who visited the fort and left his name as a lasting memory was Abraham Markle. He was a native of New York

state, but had moved to Canada and became a member of the Provincial Parliament. When the war of 1812 broke out he returned to his old home and entered the army with a rank of major British Government property in Canda. For and to idemnity him for his loss the United States made him large land grants and extra pay. With these warrants he took up several sections which included the site of Fort Harrison. He became a benefactor to the community by building a mill on Otter Creek. The Markle family has grown and prospered in Vigo County.

Another early visitor at Fort Harrison whose later work had much to do in shaping the destiny of Terre Haute was Chauncey Rose. Mr. Rose visited Fort Harrison in the fall of 1817. He spent some time in Terre Haute. After a winter in Kentucky he returned to Terre Haute and became a citizen. His energy made possible the development of the new country and in passing his benefactions will perpetuate his memory.

FORT PASSES INTO HISTORY

On the later history down to recent years the part that Fort Harrison played in the community is somewhat shrouded in hazy tradition. From the time the fort was abandoned as a military post in 1822 it gradually fell into decay. The walls and blockhouses disappeared. Only the site remains. The postoffice was moved to Terre Haute in 1818 so that even the last few years of the actual activities of the fort lost much of their interest because citizens had little occasion to visit the post except on holidays.

The site of Fort Harrison preserves one of the few distinct evidences of the nation's first great internal improvement. Along the river front is the old canal bed and a portion of the old towpath. This canal which

was not completed until the time for canals was passed, was made possible by legislation of 1824. Large land grants were made by Congress in 1827 to encourage the building of canals. The West made its plea heard and was favored. The state of Indiana also lent aid to the enterprise.

The appeals of our representatives in Washington now for development of the Wabash River as a waterway are but echoes of the pleas that then rang through the halls of Congress for means to build a great national waterway. Contracts for the Wabash and Erie Canal were let in 1832. Work was carried on as rapidly as possible and the work was finished in part in 1843. In 1852 the entire line to Evansville was open for traffic. But a faster method of transportation had appeared. People then demanded railroads. The canal enterprise lasted about 10 years. The town prospered and the community was rapidly developed. Even after the canal was abandoned some boats were kept running from Terre Haute as far south as Worthington. This was encouraged by local merchants but after two years it was given up since it could not be made profitable.

CANAL LEAVES ITS MARK

The building of the canal brought Fort Harrison into notice, but it left its mark on the old post. Falling timbers of the old fort stockade furnished fuel for the camps of canal builders. There was no chance to make the fort site anything more than a station along the waterway.

The site of the old fort passed through various hands. Some of the old logs were used in the erection of a one-story residence. They were covered with weatherboarding and remain well preserved to the present day. A few years ago the property came into the possession of Emil

Ehrmann, a Terre Haute manufacturer. Imbued by a patriotic spirit, Mr. Ehrmann has done much to preserve the old fort site. The house has been put in good repair and greatly improved. Care has been taken that none of the logs be destroyed. The grounds have been made beautiful and on the site of one of the old blockhouses a flagpole has been erected.

Other improvements undertaken by Mr. Ehrmann include a boat landing, river front pavilion and observatory on the old tow path. These structures of reinforced concrete and stone are intended to be permanent. Care has been taken that nothing should detract from the original fort site.

Recently a movement has been started looking to the preservation of the place as a national park. This had its inception when Mr. Ehrmann opened the home for the annual meeting of the Indiana Society, Sons of the American Revolution. The first patriotic assemblage since the old post was abandoned was two years ago when decendents of the men who made the nation possible met within the walls built of the old logs and adopted a memorial urging the nation to mark the historic spot.

Since that time the Indiana Division, Sons of Veterans, has been entertained by Mr. Ehrmann. Again delegates to the State Convention of County Officials which was held in Terre Haute visited the old fort side and spent several hours viewing the places of interest and admiring the valuable heirlooms Mr. Ehrmann has collected and preserved in the house.

An now, nearly one hundred years since Fort Harrison was build, the veterans of the great war that saved the nation, are to have opportunity to visit the beautiful place. There the preservers of the

country may pay their silent tribute to the sturdy pioneers who established themselves in the wilderness and gave their lives to make possible the extension of free institutions into what is now the great commercial, industrial and educational center of the land.

WHAT THE FT. HARRISON CENTENNIAL MEANS
Written by Edward Gilbert
Terre Haute Tribune
August 11, 1912

On September 4, next, it is intended by the people of Terre Haute to celebrate the centennial of the battle of Fort Harrison. The children of the present day may not know much about the fact, or that there was a battle near Terre Haute which was one of the most important events in the history of this western country.

During the fall of one hundred years ago last year, General William Henry Harrison, who was governor of Indiana territory, marched a little army of about nine hundred men, which had been gathered together at Vincennes, up the banks of the Wabash river to where Fort Harrison was to be located. They stopped there long enough to build a fort which might be a base of supplies or a point of retreat in case of disaster. That fort was located about two miles north of where the center of Terre Haute now is. There was no town here then, such a thing as the town of Terre Haute had not then been thought of.

BATTLE OF TIPPECANOE

After resting his men and horses, and finding out through the aid of scouts, where the Indians were located and what was their strength, General Harrison marched to Tippecanoe and fought the battle of Tippecanoe on November 12, 1811. In this battle the Indians were defeated and scattered, but not conquered. According to the habits of the savages they broke up into small bands that pillaged the country, murdering and scalping women and children wherever they could be found unprotected. One very large band, the exact number of which was never known, determined to try to capture Fort Harrison, and massacre the

garrison and the people who had sought safety there.

Fort Harrison was then commanded by Captain Zackary Taylor, with a little company of soldiers, and quite a number of people who were not directly of the army. The attack was very fierce and determined. As the Indians thought, rightly, that if Fort Harrison was destroyed the only protection of the settlers would be gone and they would have free license to massacre and drive them out of the country. But the people in the fort, including women and children, worked so hard, the men fighting, and the women and children loading the guns and moulding bullets and helping to extinguish the fire the Indians had started to burn the stockade, that with great loss the Indians were driven off.

END OF INDIAN WARS

This event was really the termination of the Indian troubles in Indiana and other states. Peace was assured, and a great influx of settlers commenced at once, so that within five years so many people were living in Indiana that it was formed into a state. And there has been now for a hundred years no trouble with the Indians.

It is not to be considered that the Indians would not have been eventually driven off or made to behave like civilized beings, but for this small but very important battle, it would have been postponed many years.

Fort Harrison was build by General William Henry Harrison, who afterwards became president of the United States, and at the time of the battle which we propose to commemorate, was commanded by Captain Zackary Taylor, who distinguished himself so gallantly in the Mexican war and later was also elected president of the United States. This is said to be the only fort ever maintained by this government that has had such distinguished men to command it.

Very many of those who now live here are the descendants of men and women who were in the fort when it was garrisoned, and not a few who were in the battle.

The battle of Fort Harrison was, insofar as this western country is concerned, a decisive battle. And particularly is it so as to Terre Haute and its vicinity. Therefore, it is right and proper that the first centennial of the date should be properly observed.

THE CENTENNIAL

The Fort Harrison Centennial association is formed for this purpose, and intends to make it interesting to all. It will be of special interest to the children who should know the history of their locality as well as that of the whole country. And it is much desired that the children of the schools of this city should take a full part in this important observance. We are all children, as to that matter, for there is no one here now who knew the fort when it was occupied by the army, and even all traces of it, except its location, have disappeared from the face of the earth. But the memory should be kept green, and no better manner than that the children should be called on to observe the memory of so important an event that meant so much to their present homes.

EIGHTY-FIFTH WILL HOLD REUNION HERE
Tribune, August 11, 1912

Valiant Defenders of the Union to
Gather Around the Camp Fire
in September

Fifty years ago the young men of Vigo county heard the call to arms, and on September 2 were mustered into service. They fought through the long months of the civil war, and Uncle Sam tried to muster them out. But the old boys were still the Eighty-fifth Indiana, and on Monday, September 2, they are coming back to the scenes of their young manhood for the fiftieth reunion.

Colonel A. B. Crane, the old commander of the regiment, is in New York city, but is planning to attend the reunion of the boys of '61. Other officers will also be present.

The reunion will extend into the following day. Coming at the same time as the Fort Harrison Centennial association's celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the battle of Fort Harrison, the two patriotic observations will harmonize, and the reunion will be made a feature of the centennial program.

Captain William T. Crawford, (brevet major), of Sullivan, is president of the regimental association, and Major Frank C. Crawford, of Terre Haute, secretary. These men have issued to all of the old comrades an urgent invitation to be present for the occasion, and the biggest reunion of the regiment that has been held in years is expected for the first week of September.

George E. Farrington and Lawrence Burget have been in charge of the local arrangements for the entertainment of the old boys. The soldiers are being urged in the invitations to remain in Terre Haute for the entire

three days of the centennial celebration.

The circuit court room has been secured for the use of the regiment. The Memorial hall building will also be used for a part of the meetings. Captain W. T. Crawford will meet members of the local committee in a short time to arrange the details of the program. Nothing definite has been determined as to the program, but it will take parts of both Monday and Tuesday of centennial week.

Campfire speeches and other public meetings will be a part of the program. Every effort will be made by the resident members and citizens of Terre Haute to make the visit of the veterans a happy one that will be cherished by them till the final "muster out."

Many of the veterans of the Eighty-fifth regiment are still living, though widely scattered. The addresses of most of the old boys are known to the committee, and invitations have been sent to each. Responses being received are favorable. The boys who marched from Terre Haute fifty years ago are gradually dropping away, and this will be one of the best opportunities left to them to get together at a time when the spirit of a dignified and patriotic observance of our country's history is being carried out.

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TRIBUNE, September 1, 1912

BATTLE OF FORT HARRISON

PROGRAM FOR THE REPRODUCTION OF THE BATTLE OF FORT HARRISON, SEPT. 4, 1912.

BATTLEFIELD-- West bank of the river south of the wagon bridge. The fort defended by a faithful band of pioneers.

THE HOUR--Eight o'clock p.m.

THE ATTACK--Under general command of Big Chief George T. Smith, representing big Chief Lenner, who led the attack on the original fort. The following local tribes of Red Men will attempt to take the fort by surprise:

Shawnee tribe under command of Chief Little Turtle, represented by Tammy Tribe led by Chief Bilby.

Miami tribe under command of Chief Big Brant, represented by Iono, led by Chief Wilson.

Delaware tribe under command of Chief War Eagle, represented by Ute tribe, led by Chief Eastman.

Kickapoo tribe under command of Chief Montino, represented by Poconda tribe, led by Chief Pierce.

Indians in canoes who join with the land forces will be represented by members of the Terre Haute Motor Boat club under command of Commodore Ed Tetzl, Jr.

THE RELIEF--Rescue party of United States troops from the fort at Vincennes will be represented by Company B under command of Capt. Ben Wimer.

PROGRESS OF THE BATTLE

8:00 p.m.--Warning to the natives--three heavy explosions from within the fort.

8:05 p.m.--Magnificent set piece in natural colors--"Fort Harrison" as it appeared in 1812.

8:15 p.m.--Advance guard of Indians, skulking through the underbrush, attempt to set fire to the south side of the fort.

8:20 p.m.--Defenders of the fort discover attacking party. Terror stalks midst the handful of brave men within the stockade.

8:25 p.m.--Indians in canoes dart from concealment and join land forces in attack on fort.

8:35 p.m.--Indians close in on citadel, giving war cries of victory. Canoes carrying Indians advance and firebrands flash through the air.

8:40 p.m.--Rescue party from Vincennes, coming in from south, surprise Indians from the rear.

8:50 p.m.--Terrific battle ensues.

8:55 p.m.--Defenders of fort, with hope renewed, re-double fire on attacking force.

9:00 p.m.--Indians in full flight.

9:05 p.m.--Victorious troops celebrate victory--Magnificent set pieces,

"Halley's Comet," "Johnson Aeroplane," "Waterfall," "Cascade," "Devil in a box," "Niagara Falls," "Floating Mystery."

9:20 p.m.--Magnificent finale--"Good night."

Chairman Marx Myers requests that spectators avoid the west bank of the river near the battle scene owing to the danger of injury among the non-combatants. The bridge and the east bank of the river will afford room for all.

RAISING OF FLAG MARKS CEREMONY AT OLD FORT SITE

Namesake and Decendant of
Illustrious Builder Unveils
Monument
(Terre Haute Star - Sept. 5, 1912)

GREAT CROWD ATTENDS PATRIOTIC OBSERVANCE

Former Vice President Honors Successful
Centennial With Eloquent Address

With ceremony befitting the occasion, the rough hewn granite monument marking the site of old Fort Harrison was unveiled yesterday afternoon and the stars and stripes were hoisted above the column by William Henry Harrison, great-great grandson of the illustrious builder of the historic old fortress. The unveiling ceremony was supplemented by a dignified celebration commemorating the battle of Fort Harrison in which both members of the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution and Masons participated.

On the banks of the historic Wabash river last night the Battle of Fort Harrison was fought over again for the educational value of the younger generation of Americans. Fort Harrison in miniature, perched on a slight eminence on the west bank of the river, was stormed by scores of Red Men, representing the Indians under Chief Lenar, and just when the fight raged fiercest--when things looked hopeless for the little garrison of frontiersmen, help came and the fort was saved. The fierce attack of the rescue party--Company B, Indiana National Guard, under command of Capt. Benjamin Wimer--followed by the most elaborate fireworks display ever shown in Terre Haute made an excellent climax to the three days' Centennial Celebration.

The fireworks display and sham battle attracted an enormous crowd, which lined the east bank, forming a living amphitheater, overflowed on Wabash avenue bridge and utilized every river craft on the river. It is estimated that between 30,000 and 40,000 people witnessed the event.

MOTORBOATS AID EVENT

Promptly at the time set for the crowning event of the Centennial the pyrotechnical display begun. The first number--a set-piece--blazed forth, giving a beautiful likeness of old Fort Harrison in red, which turned into a brilliant white. Then came an extra display furnished by the flotilla of motorboats, under command of Commodore Ed Tetzels, Jr.

Before executing the attack on the fort the Indians, headed by Chief George T. Smith, gathered the tribes for a war dance on the river bank south of the fort. Clad in full Indian garb the aborigines then made their midnight sally, which ended in defeat.

The pyrotechnical display that followed was beautiful beyond expectation, each piece seemingly more beautiful than the one that preceded it. Much credit is due to the members of the sham battle committee and to officers of the Del Grande Fireworks Company of Paris, Ill., who personally conducted the display. From the beginning until the last spark died away on the river there was not a hitch in the program and the large crowd returned to their homes well pleased with the evening's entertainment--an entertainment which reflected credit to the Centennial committee and to Terre Haute.

The ceremonies on the site of Fort Harrison were most impressive in character and were held before the largest crowd ever on the site. Many were seated under the trees in a large circle about the speaker's stand. Others walked about the beautiful lawn. A small stand had been

erected on the lawn in front of the Emil Ehrmann home, and around the stand seats had been reserved for members of the Fort Harrison Chapter of the Daughters of the Revolution, Sons of the American Revolution and other guests of the Centennial Association.

Dr. W. W. Parsons, president of Indiana State Normal, presided, introducing former Vice-President Charles W. Fairbanks as "Indiana's first living citizen." Mr. Fairbanks said:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

When we contemplate what transpired here 100 years ago and then consider the present; when we think of the wilderness as it was and compare it with the pushing, thriving city of Terre Haute; when we contrast the then with the now--it seems as though some mighty magician had swept his magic wand over the spot whereon we stand. One can scarcely realize that out of a wilderness inhabited by savage men this high-minded, intelligent, patriotic community should have evolved in so short a time, that out of turbulence and war we should come to the enjoyment of unvexed peace.

One hundred years! How brief when compared with the empires and the monarchies and the republics of old; how short when compared with Cathay or the land of the Parohs! A century! How small it seems in the presence of the cities upon the banks of the Euphrates; how insignificant it becomes in the presence of the history of the venerable Grecian cities and of ancient Rome. Yes, how hardly worth the mentioning when we recall the younger but still venerable kingdoms and empires of continental Europe.

We are all familiar with men and women now living who have more than rounded out a century. During the 100 years that have elapsed

since this ground was made historic the tide of human progress has ebbed and flowed; the wilderness has vanished and the red men who for un-numbered years were monarchs of this soil have passed away; civilization has been built up; in the place of the forest are churches and cathedrals; school houses and courts of justice; temples of industry; farms and mines; and vast highways filled with the moving products of the genius and labor of a great people. Why is it that we have left the farm and turned from the busy mart; why is it that we have come from the counting-house and the factories to celebrate this day? The Battle of Fort Harrison when compared with the battles in which many of you men were engaged and when contrasted with some of the great engagements of history would seem to the careless to be unworthy of arresting our attention and turning our feet hither. To many it would seem that the event of a century ago would hardly justify the patriotic music with which we are enraptured, and that it should not call forth the flag which is manifest everywhere and which gives to Terre Haute her holiday aspect.

STORY WILL ENDURE

Neither regiments nor army corps were engaged upon this field; no battalions maneuvered here--yet we have come to celebrate the battle of Fort Harrison. The story of the engagement is familiar to us all, although many battles where larger forces were employed have faded from our memories.

The fact is that we gather here to celebrate an historic event out of a sense of gratitude and as evidence of our appreciation of the institutions under which we have achieved so much and which were not possible except for the arduous service and the splendid self-sacrifice of such as those who fought here.

Gratitude is one of the noblest of human virtues. No people can progress that do not possess it. If we are rightly constituted we are

grateful to those who serve us, sacrifice for us, and who go down to the battlefield and place their all upon the sacrificial altar of their country for us. It is the quality of the act which awakens our gratitude and not merely the numbers employed.

The battle of Fort Harrison was not characterized by any large strategic movements, by any spectacular generalship, by any long, wearisome and elaborate preparation, or by any severe and protracted siege; nevertheless there were displayed here qualities of the best type of soldier and commander; courage of a high order, and a grim determination among the small band to defy the enemy at whatever cost. The coward would have beaten an early retreat under the protection of darkness and the forest. The small number within and the large number of the enemy without suggested such an unequal contest as might have made cowards of most men; but not so with Captain Taylor and the small band that the total force of the little garrison numbered about 50 and that of these only about 15 were fit for duty, the others had been smitten by disease. The stockade was an invitation to fire and it would seem that it would not long prove a formidable fortress against the larger number of the attacking force.

We cannot too often recall the fine spirit of devotion which was manifested here; the willingness to die if need be in defense of home and country which was admirably illustrated. When brave men and brave women challenge death, when they prefer massacre rather than surrender their country's cause, their names and deeds are entitled to perpetual remembrance and should be recalled on every fit occasion to serve as an example to others and to stimulate their devotion to their country and their service to their government. It is a splendid thing to mark the fields where men and women have suffered and sacrificed for their fellowmen.

What they did should be constantly kept in mind for its beneficial influence upon the rising generation. Let the new generation thus see that those who are most honored are those who do most for their fellows in the hours of stress and strain.

STORY OF FORT HARRISON

The story of Fort Harrison is within a comparatively narrow compass. Yet it holds our interest and will retain a permanent place in the progress of our state and in the development of our country, and more particularly in the development of the great Mississippi Valley. A year ago we celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the battle of Tippecanoe. Thousands of people assembled upon the field beyond Lafayette where General Harrison in a fierce engagement defeated a strong force of Indiana under the command of the prophet, Tecumseh's brother.

At that time the relations between the United States and Great Britain were becoming more and more strained. Our old enemy had not become reconciled to the young nation and permitted no occasion to pass when she might embarrass or humiliate us. We were then less than eight millions all told and had but little claim upon the regard of the nations of the world. Compared with the older powers we were a weak nation and in the courts of the world our early downfall was freely and confidently predicted. It was generally believed abroad that our institutions were founded upon a political fallacy; that government resting upon the consent of the governed could not long survive. One hundred years ago the population in what is now the state of Indiana did not exceed six or seven thousand people. They were widely scattered and their means of co-operation in their mutual defense were restricted.

Great Britain at that time assumed an attitude of contemptuous disregard of our rights; she harassed our commerce upon the high seas;

her forcible seizure of American citizens for service in her navy was so flagrant that it made war with the United States inevitable. Our dignity and our national sovereignty were assailed and the proud-spirited, ambitious, self-respecting nation which had been set up here in defiance of Great Britain by George Washington and his immortal compatriots, while now to go to war, was left no honorable alternative. We can scarcely believe that so recently as 100 years ago Great Britain was able to seize the national capitol, burn the congressional building, occupy and destroy in a large measure the White House itself. It is true that the enemy did not remain long in the seat of our nation's power; but that he was able to enter the national capitol and commit such depredations as he did only a century ago seems almost incredible. But such was the fact; and it goes to show how weak and defenceless we were, comparatively speaking, when the battle of Fort Harrison was fought. Times have changed, our weakness has become strength; our national capitol will not again be occupied by an alien enemy, unless we are false to the best traditions of the republic and allow our national spirit and the virtues which we have inherited from our ancestors to fall into hopeless decay.

The threatening storm between the United States and Great Britain which culminated in the war of 1812 suggested to our enemies the strategic importance of the Wabash and Ohio River Valleys. Great Britain made allies of the powerful Indian tribes, furnished them with modern arms and ammunition and incited them to deeds of violence.

RECORDS TELL OF HEROES

We are quite familiar with the history of Fort Harrison. It has been written from fragmentary public records and tradition which has been well authenticated by the descendants of the actors in the drama, some of whom still reside in this neighborhood. The Fort was built one year before

the battle whose anniversary we celebrate. It was constructed by General William Henry Harrison, a name familiar and honored in the annals of our state, after whom it was named. The general maintained his military headquarters at Vincennes. Learning that a formidable force of Indians had assembled at the prophet's town, a few miles from the present site of Lafayette, he resolved to march against the enemy. In command of an adequate force he set out upon his expedition along the Wabash. In due time, we are informed, he reached "a beautiful eminence of the east bank of the Wabash, three miles north of the present Vigo County court house in Terre Haute. The site selected was the point nearest the Indian boundary that was suitable for a fort. It was on a sharp eastward bend of the river so that there was a good view both up and down stream. The land rises 25 to 30 feet above low water and was covered with light forest of oak, honey locust and other trees which furnished the timber in building the fort. During the months of September and October the walls of the fort were erected out of timber which was hewn out of the forest. The fort was about 150 feet square. We are told that the northwest and southwest corners terminated in blockhouses (small buildings in the corners forming parts of the walls.) The opposite angles terminated in bastions, which projected sufficiently to command the outside of the walls in two directions. The blockhouses and bastions were two stories high and pierced on both faces with embrasures above and below, through which to fire upon the enemy. Within the fortifications and forming the western line were the soldiers' barracks--rude log huts. The gate opened toward the east. On the north side of this was the guard house, on the south the magazine, and near it the well. Along the northern line were the stables, sheds and the like for the accommodation of the garrison.

The fort was to be a store house of supplies for the army and a protection in case of defeat or disaster in the campaign upon which General Harrison was entering. A little less than a year after the fort was erected it became the theater of particular interest in the Wabash Valley. The small garrison was a brave one, as subsequent events fully proved. There were no troops in easy supporting distance, in fact the nearest aid was some 50 miles distant and the wilderness lay between. Captain Zachary Taylor, then a young man, designed to play a conspicuous part in the subsequent history of his country, was the officer in command. As heretofore observed, 50 men were subject to his orders, but much the larger percent were then incapable of rendering the assistance which was so sorely needed. They were suffering from malaria, a malady which was quite as menacing to the small army as were the savages of the forest, in fact it was more dangerous, as no fortress was effective against it. The efficient force, therefore, as above mentioned, was some 15 men. There were within the fort non-combatants, women and children to the number of probably nine; and it should not be forgotten that these women to the extent of their capacity rendered effective service in the common defense. There is only one name among the women whose service we are familiar with, and that is Julia Lambert. She quite distinguished herself in the contest here as did Molly Pitcher at the battle of Monmouth in the days of the revolution. It is said that the women during the fire which the Indians had set to the blockhouse and which seriously imperiled the lives of all within, drew water from the well which the men passed to the roof of the burning blockhouse. The water got low in the well so that a full bucket did not be drawn. In this critical exigency, Julia

Lambert volunteered to go down into the well and fill the buckets. She never fully recovered, it is said, from the exhaustion of her work and exposure. When the fire was finally under control "the women loaded the guns for the men and the girls moulded bullets." This suggests that in giving credit to those who aided in laying the foundations of our institutions and in building up our civilization we should never fail to pay a large share of the tribute of our admiration and gratitude to the women whose services, less spectacular than the service of their brothers, were none the less real, none the less effective and none the less attained by hardship and suffering.

It appears from authentic records that the prophet who had suffered such disastrous defeat at Tippecanoe the fall previous determined upon an expedition against Fort Harrison in 1812 and in his enterprise no doubt had the aid of the British.

The story of the engagement here is of dramatic interest. It is told well and graphically by Captain Taylor in his report to General Harrison.

IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGEMENT

There is no doubt that the engagement here was a part of a large plan--but an incident in the purpose of the British to deal an effective blow at the young Republic. The Indians were helpful allies of our old enemy. Detroit, near to British territory, and the Wabash Valley were of strategic importance to the British, and if they should be wrested from our hands it would count tremendously against us. We are told in an interesting sketch of Fort Harrison that: "In August, 1812, an expedition was started out from Malden, Canada, under command of Major Muhr. This was composed of a small company of British regulars, some Canadian volunteers and a host of

Indians. These numbers were never definitely known. The object, so soon after the declaration of war, was to capture the two outposts of Fort Wayne and Fort Harrison. Both of these objects failed. We have seen how Captain Taylor successfully defended Fort Harrison. Fort Wayne was stubbornly defended for a short time until reinforcements arrived and the besiegers driven out of the country. The British regulars and the Canadians all went in the expedition against Fort Wayne. It was left to the Indians to proceed against the less strongly defended fort on the Wabash." That there was concerted action between the British and their Indian allies is manifested from their movements. The attacks upon the two posts were only a few hours apart. The one at Fort Wayne occurred September 3, 1812 and the one at Fort Harrison here the night following.

Detroit having been a short time previously surrendered to the British there was little in the way of fortification down to the Ohio River, except at Fort Wayne and Fort Harrison, and if the subjugation of these two defenses could be effected the theater of war could be transferred from the lakes to the Ohio River. What effect this would have had upon the second war with England is problematical. We can readily believe, however, that it would have largely rebounded to the benefit of the enemies of our country and at least have prolonged the contest.

The impregnability of the fort and its successful defense no doubt had a profoundly discouraging influence upon the Indians and a very beneficial influence upon the cause of the government.

It seems to me that one of the larger effects of the battle of Fort Harrison was not the redemption of the Wabash Valley from the hands of the savages and its dedication to the orderly and peaceful progress of civilization, but really one of the larger

results of the event lies in the influence of the example of unselfish service upon the lives and purposes of those who are in the enjoyment of and who shall continue to enjoy the fruits of the valor of those who gave themselves over with a spirit of patriotic abandon, if you please, to the cause of free government and free men.

Historic events such as the one that is uppermost in our thoughts today are always obscured more or less in their details by the lapse of time. What transpired here is no exception to the general rule. The chief outlines, however, have been pretty well preserved through the report of the commander and the efforts of men and women who have had pardonable pride in preserving the dramatic story. They have gathered up the fragments here and there and put them together as some finished mosaic so that we are made familiar with the actors in the tragedy, both combatants and non-combatants. We share a common regret that the government archives at Washington do not contain the names of all the brave soldiers who distinguished themselves in successfully defending the fort, repulsing the enemy and in saving from horrible massacre men, women and children who otherwise would have been left to the mercy of the savages. It seems as though it were the irony of fate that so few of the names of those who were engaged in the tragic event which transpired here have survived until now. So far as I have been able to learn only two of the persons who fought here are now known, and these are Captain Zachary Taylor and Dr. William A. Clark, one afterwards distinguished as a general in the Halls of the Montezumas and later President of the United States, and the other the surgeon of the garrison. How we wish we knew the names of the little band that we might pronounce them with veneration and honor. The memory of their service survives, though they are forgotten. Forgotten did I say--

that is an inappropriate word; for the God of the Universe does not forget those who serve and sacrifice for their fellowmen.

THE PAST

It is well for us as we grow in strength and power, as our population multiplies, as conditions in life change, to turn our attention away from the present to the past and live over from time to time the old experiences and draw from old conditions new encouragement and from old circumstances inspiration for the present. We have hardships now, but we find there were hardships then, and that our ancestors met them bravely in their effort to lay the foundations upon which our present greatness and prosperity have been built.

The pioneers who a hundred years ago braved the miasmatic swamps, fought the Indians and felled the forests here, were as fine a type of hardy manhood and womanhood as can be found in all of the ample story of the human race. They had faith in each other, faith in their political institutions and reliance upon the God of their fathers. Although perils encompassed them about they were not discouraged. They were not weaklings. They came here to build their homes, to found society and to advance civilization. They came with a resolute will and no adversity could swerve them from their purpose. We eagerly read the story of their adventure; we search out every fact in their lives; we like to contemplate the blockhouses of their defense; the rude log cabins; the coonskins upon the door; the ample fire-place within; the spinning-wheel in the corner; the Linsey-Woolsey garments, plain and strong as the faithful hands that made them, the indispensable "flint-lock" against the rustic chimney; the old spring by the brook; the ox-cart

and its patient oxen; the log church and the log school house with their puncheon floors. These all remind us of the day of small beginnings; and of the arduous times which produced the best fiber in American character. One of the splendid things about those days was the neighborly spirit which prevailed among the people; in the final analysis, a sense of mutual dependence, developed sharing as they did common hardships and common dangers; they were fused into a homogeneous community. A sense of equality was all pervading; there was then no suggestion of caste; there were no disintegrating influences and no cleavage in the body politic; the safety of every member of the community lay in standing together and in co-operation; there was in it all a recognition of the fact that by standing together they would get on together and thereby attain the highest common good.

Change is the order of the day; but the essential principles which should govern our relations with each other and which should characterize our attitude towards the communities in which we live do not change. That mutual confidence which existed in the long ago should continue; that reciprocal spirit of mutual helpfulness which our pioneer fathers and mothers possessed in so abundant a degree should not be allowed to die out of our hearts; we should cultivate it and preserve it as one of the noble traits in human character and as one of the essential factors in the ideal community. Nothing can be more unfortunate than for us to forget and cease to practice those homely virtues which we associate with the pioneers whose lives we recall upon this historic occasion. We are too apt to be blinded to them with our increasing population and growing wealth.

Each generation has its own particular problems. They differ in detail, but do not essentially differ as to their complexity. It requires a high order of intelligence and a fine spirit of patriotic devotion to meet and solve them.

We see running through the development of our country in the last one hundred years, as well as before, the guiding hand of a beneficent Providence. Our way has not been free from difficulties. Grave obstacles have lined our path. Wars within and without have engaged our attention. But we have come through it all with national prestige untarnished, our strength unimpaired, our advance unchecked. We have never contemplated for a moment the sounding of retreat. Obstacles and difficulties have only strengthened our purpose and have emphasized the wisdom and beneficence of our institutions. Whenever our Republic has been menaced from within or without brave defenders have freely volunteered to uphold the national integrity and to vindicate the national honor. Our people have cultivated from the earliest hour of our history a wholesome national spirit; a sentiment which holds that the interest of each is the concern of all, and that an affront to one of our countrymen is an affront to all.

CONCLUSION

We regard what occurred here one hundred years ago as related to our progress as a people. One thought therefore naturally turn to Indiana; we are proud of her not only because of what she has been, but because of what she is destined to be. She assumed the dignities of Statehood four years after the Battle of Fort Harrison and her sixty thousand population then has grown to be nearly two million eight hundred thousand now. We have developed in material strength with tremendous rapidity; the farm and factory and

mine are the sources of wealth and power; we rightly regard them as essential elements in the development of a great state; but beyond these we value the high standard of our citizenship. Our people stand for the best intellectual, moral and patriotic ideals. These they well understand constitute the crowning glory of our civilization."

With simple but impressive ceremony the huge granite monument marking the site of Fort Harrison was dedicated by members of the Daughters of Revolution. The service opened with the singing of the School Song of Indiana, by Mrs. Dora Hauck Cooper and chorus of the Daughters of Revolution. Miss Mary Alice Warren, regent of Fort Harrison Chapter, D.A.R., then read the ritual service, and William Henry Harrison, fifth descendant of the fort's illustrious founder, unfurled the flag above the shaft while the audience sang the Star Spangled Banner.

President Parsons in his introductory address paid eloquent tribute to the Daughters of American Revolution as a patriotic society. After the Centennial address, Colonel Russell B. Harrison made a short talk, as did his son, William Henry Harrison.

Another beautiful service followed the address of Mr. Fairbanks. Members of Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 Free and Accepted Masons, took charge of the celebration, depositing a wreath of Immortelles on the monument. J. S. Jordon, Worshipful Master of No. 19, presided in the calling up of the lodge and introduced Judge Charles J. Orbison of Indianapolis, who delivered an address. Judge Orbison recounted something of the work of Terre Haute Lodge No. 19 which, in its early history, was so interwoven with the affairs of Fort Harrison. No less than eight of the charter members of the lodge participated in the defense of Fort Harrison, according to the speaker. The

ceremony ended with "America" by the band and audience.

EHRMANN DOES HONORS

The busiest and happiest man at Fort Harrison yesterday was Emil Ehrmann, owner of the property. Mr. Ehrmann has been the willing and valued assistant of the Centennial Association in every detail of the arrangement and decoration of the grounds. He was up early yesterday morning when members of the executive committee motored out at 7 o'clock. At that time Mr. Ehrmann was directing the placing of urns of flowers, providing places for water barrels and looking after the arrangement of the seats and final touches to the decorations.

Capt. O. M. Watts and Company No. 83, Woodmen of the World, had been assigned as ushers for the grounds, but the vehicle that was to convey them from the end of the car line to the Fort failed to show up. Another conveyance was engaged, but it broke down before it was out of sight of the streetcars and Captain Watts was compelled to lead his company on a hot, dusty "hike" to the Fort. During the delay Mr. Ehrmann assumed entire charge of the reception of visitors. The way he handled the situation when scores of automobiles unloaded throngs of visitors won hearty praise from officers of the Centennial Association.

Mr. Ehrmann was assisted by his sister, Mrs. Fred Reckert, who was hostess in the house. All the rooms were open for the display of historic relics. For the convenience of the thousands of visitors Mr. Ehrmann ripped a section of weather boarding from the side of the house, laying bare the logs from the old fort that were used in building the old fort that were used in building the wall of the house.

It seemed that Mr. Ehrmann was everywhere. He considered every one his personal guest and took just as much pains to see to the comfort and entertainment of the ragged little urchins as in doing honors to the distinguished guests. And he gave his own word that he enjoyed every moment of the day.

"It has been the greatest day we ever had," said Mr. Ehrmann. "The crowd is the largest that every visited Fort Harrison. I am confident more than 20,000 people have been on the grounds today. I am glad the weather has been so nice and that all could enjoy the day.

"The monument and the site seem to please. The program could not have pleased me better because I know it has been appropriate and pleasing to all."

CENTENNIAL NOTES

Yesterday's program concluded the Centennial celebration, which represented the untiring work of a handful of Terre Haute's public-spirited citizens. The executive committee, of which Postmaster Thatcher A. Parker was chairman, the finance committee, and the sham battle committee. The active members of these committees worked in harmony throughout the last four weeks, overcoming all obstacles by dint of untiring effort.

Probably no other committee worked under a harder handicap than did the sham battle committee, Marx Myers, chairman, although incapacitated for a time as a result of an accident, he proved a tireless worker, holding meetings of the committee in his apartments, often when too ill to leave his bed. He was ably assisted by George T. Smith, Captain Wimer, George Kristenstein and others.

More than 1,600 school children participated in the parade. Each boy carried a Fort Harrison pennant and wore a white cap. Drummers accompanied each squad. Thousands thronged the line of march and cheered the various divisions. The parade included Company B, the Terre Haute regiment, Colonel Fasig and company of police, city officials in autos and several decorated floats and autos and carriages. The float provided by the Central Labor Union led the third division. The Ben-Hur order was represented by a chariot and guard of Roman soldiers. The Knights of Columbus car carried the local Catholic clergy. Members of the Equal Suffrage League and Ladies of the Grand Army also were in line with decorated vehicles.

The only thing that marred the complete success of the day was the lack of vehicles to convey the crowds from the car line to the fort. Many hacks and trucks were promised, but the few that responded were swamped. Every private and public auto in Terre Haute was in use and it was necessary to hire two cars from Indianapolis to care for the special guests of the Centennial Association.

President Parker was warmly congratulated by his associates in the Centennial Association for the success of the celebration. He replied by saying that the workers who had stood by him loyally were entitled to credit as well as himself and said that it was only through united and untiring efforts that the celebration was made such a pleasing event.

FAIRBANKS IS HAPPY
TERRE HAUTE GUEST

Centennial Speaker Expresses
Himself as Much Pleased
With Events of Day

Terre Haute Star
September 5, 1912

No one who attended the Fort Harrison Centennial celebration yesterday was more pleased than former Vice President Fairbanks, who spoke at the Harrison School and at Fort Harrison. Repeatedly during the day he would turn to some member of the Centennial officers or his personal escort and express his thanks for the entertainment. He was supremely happy all day and smiled as he waved his good-bye from the train.

President Parker of the Centennial Association appointed a personal escort to accompany Mr. Fairbanks during the day. The members were John C. Warren, chairman; Morris Kleeman, I. F. Mehegan and James E. Somes. Between engagements the staff motored about the city with Mr. Fairbanks. The honor guest expressed surprise at the recent growth and improvement of Terre Haute.

Mr. Fairbanks was an honor guest at an elaborate luncheon at noon at the Terre Haute House. The ordinary was specially draped and the guests were seated at one large circular table. The luncheon was arranged at the direction of Mr. Parker by Mr. Warren and was one of the delightful features of Mr. Fairbanks' visit. Seated with Mr. Fairbanks were members of the personal escort, Colonel Harrison and his son, William Henry, Dr. T. C. Stunkard, Harold Stunkard, President Parsons of the Normal, President Parker of the Centennial Association, Edward Gilbert, secretary; George Oscar Dix and C. T. Jewett.

After the luncheon Mr. Fairbanks and the party reviewed the parade from the south balcony of the hotel. Mr. Fairbanks was first to applaud the appearance of the various divisions and was happily surprised at the great showing made by the boys of the public, Parochal, Rose Orphans' Home and township schools.

Following the ritual service, conducted by the Daughters of the American Revolution at the site of old Fort Harrison yesterday afternoon, the monument was unveiled by William Henry Harrison V, Capt. O. M. Watts was appointed military aide to Mr. Harrison and assisted in the unveiling.

THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH
ANNIVERSARY BUT RECENTLY PASSED

History of the Whole Northwest Might Have Been Changed Had
Not American Forces Won Fight
on Site of Terre Haute

1925

The 113th. anniversary of Ft. Harrison has just passed. Had not the American forces won the siege of the famous outpost the whole history of the northwest might have been changed, and Terre Hauteans would hardly be following Colonel Bogey about the Ft. Harrison links today.

It was on Friday, Sept. 4, 1812, that the fort just north of the present city on the site of the Fort Harrison Country club, was attacked by Indians.

A young army captain, only 28 years old, later to become president of his country, was in command of the fort and sent the following account of the incident to his superior officer:

"Fort Harrison,
"September 10, 1812.

"Dear Sir--On Thursday evening, the 3rd instant, after retreat beating, four guns were heard to fire in the direction where two young men (citizens who resided here) were making hay, about four hundred yards distant from the fort. I was immediately impressed with the idea that they were killed by the Indians, as the Miamis or Weas had that day informed me that the Prophet's party would soon be here for the purpose of commencing hostilities, and that they had been directed to leave this place, which we were about to do. I did not think it prudent to send out at that late hour of the night to see what had become of them; and their not coming in

convinced me that I was right in my conjecture. I waited until 8 o'clock next morning, when I sent out a corporal with a small party to find them, if it could be done without running too much risk of being drawn into an ambushade. He soon sent back to inform me, that he had found them both killed, and wished to know my further orders; I sent the cart and oxen, had them brought in and buried; they had been shot with two balls, scalped and cut in the most shocking manner.

INDIAN GROUP ARRIVES

"Late in the evening of the 4th inst. old Joseph Lenar and between 30 and 40 Indians arrived from the Prophet's town, with a white flag; among whom were about ten women, and the men were composed of the chiefs of the different tribes that compose the Prophet's party. A Shawanoe man, who spoke good English, informed me that old Lenar intended to speak to me next morning, and try to get something to eat. At retreat beating I examined the men's arms and found them all in good order, and completed their cartridges to 16 rounds per man. As I had not been able to mount a guard of more than six privates and two non-commissioned officers, for sometime past, and sometimes part of them every other day from the unhealthiness of the company, I had not conceived my force adequate to the defense of this post should it be vigorously attacked, for sometime past. As I had just recovered from a very severe attack of the fever, I was not able to be up much through the night.

"After tatoo, I cautioned the guard to be vigilant, and ordered one of the non-commissioned officers, as the sentinels could not see every part of the garrison, to wall around on the inside during the whole night to prevent the Indians taking advantage of us

provided they had any intention of attacking us.

AWAKENED BY SHOT

"About 11 o'clock I was awakened by the firing of one of the sentinels. I sprang up, ran out and ordered the men to their posts, when my orderly sergeant (who had charge of the upper block house) called out that the Indians had fired the lower block house, which contained the property of the contractor, which was deposited in the lower part, the upper having been assigned to a corporal and 10 privates as an alarm port. The guns had begun to fire pretty smartly from both sides. I directed the buckets to be got ready and the water brought from the well and the fire extinguished immediately, as it was preceivable at that time. But from debility or some other cause, the men were very slow to executing my orders. The word fire seemed to throw the whole of them into confusion, and by the time they had got the water and broken open the door the fire had unfortunately communicated to a quantity of whisky (the stock having licked several holes through the lower part of the building after the salt that was stored there to which they had introduced the fire without being discovered, as the night was very dark, and in spite of every exertion we could make use of, in less than a moment it ascended to the roof and baffled every effort we could make to extinguish it.

"As that blockhouse adjoined the barracks that made part of the fortifications most of the men immediately gave themselves up for lost, and I had the greatest difficulty in getting my orders executed; and sir, what from the raging of the fire--the yelling and howling of several hundred Indians--the cries of nine women and children (part soldiers' and part citizens' wives, who had taken shelter in the fort)--

and the despending of so many of the men, which was worse than all--
I can assure you that my fellings were very unpleasant--and indeed,
there were not more than 10 or 15 men able to do a great deal,
the others being either sick or convalescent--and to add to our other
misfortunes, two of the stoutest men in the fort and that I had
very confidence in, jumped the picket and left us.

KEPT PRESENCE OF MIND

"But my presence of mind did not for a moment forsake me. I
saw that by throwing off part of the roof that joined the blockhouse
that was on fire and keeping the end perfectly wet the whole row of
buildings might be saved and leave only an entrance of 18 or 20
feet for the Indians to enter after the house was consumed, and
that a temporary breastwork might be erected to prevent their even
entering these. I convinced the men that this could be accomplished
and it appeared to inspire them with new life, and never did men
act with more firmness or desperation. Those that were able (while
the others kept up a constant fire from the other blockhouse and
the two bastions) mounted the roofs of the houses with Dr. Clark
at their head (who acted with the greatest firmness and presence
of mind thw whole time the attack lasted, which was seven hours),
under a shower of bullets, and in less than a moment threw off as
much of the roof as was necessary.

"This was done only with the loss of one man and two wounded
and I am in hopes neither of them dangerous. The man that was
killed was a little deranged and did not get off the house as soon
as directed or he would not have been hurt; and, although the
barracks were several times in a blaze and an immense quantity of
fire against them, the men used such exertion that they kept it

under and before day raised a temporary breastwork as high as a man's head, although the Indians continued to pour in a heavy fire of ball and innumerable quantity of arrows during the whole time the attack lasted in every part of the parade.

ONLY ONE MORE KILLED

"I had but one other man killed nor any other wounded inside the fort, and he lost his life by being too anxious. He got into one of the galleys on the bastions and fired over the pickets and called out to his comrades that he had killed an Indian, and neglecting to stoop down in an instant he was shot dead. One of the men that jumped the pickets returned an hour before day, and running up towards the gate begged for God's sake for it to be opened. I suspected it to be a stratagem of the Indians to get in, as I did not recollect his voice. I directed the men in the bastion, where I happened to be, to shoot him, let him be who he would, but fortunately he ran up to the other bastion, where they knew his voice and Dr. Clark directed him to lie close to the pickets behind an empty barrel that happened to be there and at daylight I had him let in. His arm was broken in a most shocking manner, which he says was done by the Indians, which I suppose was the cause of his returning. I think it probable that he will not recover. The other they caught about 130 yards from the garrison and cut him all to pieces. After keeping up a constant fire until 6 o'clock the next morning, which we began to return with some effect after daylight, they removed out of the reach of our guns. A party of them drove up the horses that belonged to the citizens here, and as they could not catch them very rapidly shot the whole of them in our sight, as well as a number of their hogs. They drove off

the whole of the cattle, which amounted to 65 head, as well as the public oxen. I had the vacancy filled up before night (which was made by the burning of the blockhouse) with a strong row of pickets, which I got by pulling down the guard house.

LOSE ALL PROVISIONS

"We lost the whole of our provisions, but must make out to live upon green corn until we can get a supply, which I am in hopes will not be long. I believe the whole of the Miamies or Weas were among the Prophet's party, as one chief gave his orders in that language which resembled Stone Easter's voice, and I believe Negro Legs was there likewise. A Frenchman here understands their different languages, and several of the Miamies or Weas that have been here frequently, were recognized by the Frenchman and soldiers next morning. The Indians suffered smartly, but were so numerous as to take off all that were shot. They continued with us until the next morning but made no further attempt on the fort, nor have we seen anything more of them since. I have delayed informing you of my situation, as I did not like to weaken the garrison, and I looked for some person from Vincennes, and none of my men were acquainted with the woods, and therefore I would either have to take the river or the road, which I was fearful was guarded by small parties of Indians that would not dare to attack a party of rangers that was on a scout; but being disappointed, I have at length, determined to send a couple of my men by water and am in hopes that they will arrive safe. I think it would be best to send, the provisions under a pretty strong scout, as the Indians may attempt to prevent their coming. If you carry on an expedition against the Prophet this fall, you ought to be well provided with everything, as you may calculate on having every inch of ground disputed between this and there that they can defend with advantage.

Wishing &c.,

(Signed) Z. TAYLOR.

"His Excellency Governor Harrison."

SOLDIERS TURN BACK

The soldiers who carried the above letter encountered Indians, probably at about the site of Terre Haute, and went back to the fort. An addition to the letter explaining the circumstances was written on September 13, and sent by land with instructions for the men to avoid the road.

Not the whole story of the attack is told in Taylor's letter as evidenced in the following account of a later historian:

"During the fire the women drew the water from the well and the men passed it up to the roof. In a short time the water got so low in the well that they could not dip the bucket full. Then Julia Lambert said, 'Let me down into the well and I will fill the buckets.' In doing this Julia dipped so much sand that after a while the well was made deeper so that the buckets dipped full again. This was talked of as a miracle. It is said that Julia never recovered from the fatigue and exposure in the well."

Whether or not Fort Harrison was saved by a miracle, the fact remains that had the fort been destroyed in the attack, the whole history of the territory would have changed and the United States would have lost a budding president.

FORT HARRISON: WHICH SHELTERED T. H. PIONEERS

An Outpost of Civilization Which
Became the Site of Young Terre Haute

Heroic Men and Women, Within Its Block House and Enclosure,
Battled With The Red Skins for This Territory Which
The City Now Occupies

Terre Haute Tribune

October 25, 1925.

by

Harry H. Hamby

Fort Harrison, one of the most historical spots in this vicinity, was erected during the fall of 1811 by General Harrison, who advanced up the river with a strong force for the purpose of subduing the Indian chief Tecumseh and his brother, the wily Prophet, members of the Shawnee tribe, whose united appeals had aroused all the tribes of the Northwest territory into the formation of a grand confederacy against the whites.

The treaty of 1809, known as the "Treaty of Fort Wayne," made by Harrison, and by which the Delaware, Miami and Pottawatamie tribes ceded to the whites a large tract of land on the Wabash, aroused the ire of Tecumseh, who was absent at the time, and who refused to acknowledge it or to abide by its conditions. He threatened with death the chiefs who had signed the treaty and announced his determination to prevent the lands being surveyed or settled.

It was after a celebrated conference at Vincennes, then the seat of government of the territory, and where Harrison's coolness and self possession saved him from death at the hand of Tecumseh, that the later began in earnest his war against the whites. Harrison was furnished by President Madison with a force of infantry from Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana and in September, 1811, began his march up to

Prophet's town, near the present location of Lafayette, where the hostile tribes had assembled. The necessity of establishing a fort was apparent, and Harrison selected this point on the Wabash, some fifty miles above Vincennes, which possessed many natural advantages as a means of defense, little thinking that almost under its wall would spring into life a great and prosperous city.

BUILDING THE FORT

The army was quartered here during the months of September and October, and the walls of the fort erected, stalwart trees of the forest furnishing the material. From rare engravings still in existence, it appears to have consisted of a rough stockade of heavy timber, about one hundred and fifty feet square.

The northwest and southeast corners, facing the river, terminated in block houses, two stories in height, pierced on both sides with embrasures in each story, through which to fire upon the enemy. The northeast and southeast corners terminated in bastions which projected sufficiently to command the outlook of the walls in two directions. The soldiers' barracks of rude log huts were within the fort and formed the western line. The gates opened to the east; north of it was the guardhouse; to the south the magazine, and near the latter was the well.

While at the fort General Harrison, under express orders from the president, attempted a reconciliation with the Indians, but his overtures were treated with contempt, and an attack made on his forces. This ended the negotiations for peace, and on October 28, General Harrison took up his march for the Prophet's town. A week

later he was attacked near the latter place by a large force of Indians, who were disastrously defeated and put to flight. The fight is known in history as the battle of Tippecanoe.

The most important event in the history of Fort Harrison was its defense against the attack of a large body of Indians, by Captain Zachary Taylor, afterwards president, in September, 1812. Taylor, then a young man of 28, exhibited, in his defense of the fort, the bravery and hardihood which, in subsequent campaigns, gave him, among his soldiers, the sobriquet of "Old Rough and Ready."

He had been in the service but a few years, having spent his life until he was 24 on his father's plantation in Kentucky. His brother, Hancock, held a lieutenant's commission in the U. S. army and upon the death of that officer in 1808, Zachary succeeded to the commission. He was promoted to a captaincy in 1810, and after the declaration of war with Great Britain in 1812, he was placed in command of Fort Harrison.

CHIEF LENAR ARRIVES

Late in the evening of the same day, Thursday, September 4, Lenar, a chief with some thirty or forty Indians of the Delaware, Pottawantamie, Kickapoo and Miami tribes, appeared before the fort bearing a white flag. The chief announced his desire to speak with the captain the following morning and obtain some provisions. Had Captain Taylor not been familiar with the tactics of his enemy the ruse might have been successful.

But he was not thrown off his guard and that night every precaution was taken against a surprise; the commander himself personally examined each soldier's equipment and supplied him with extra rounds of cartridges. He evidently was not over-confident of his ability to hold the fort against the attack, for in one of his official dispatches to

General Harrison he said:

"From the unhealthiness of my company I had not conceived my force adequate to the defense of this post, should it be vigorously attacked, for some time past."

It was no slight dress parade duty that fell to the share of the little garrison in the frontier fort. Almost in the midst of the enemy's country, surrounded by a sleepless savage foe, and kept ever on the alert day and night to guard against surprise, the brave Taylor and his little body of soldiers were worn out when in the dusk of a September evening in 1812 the presence of a savage foe in the neighborhood of the fort became manifest.

To add to the other misfortunes, two-thirds of the garrison of fifty men were sick and unfitted for duty with an epidemical fever that scourged the entire Wabash valley that year. These facts, coming to the ear of the revengeful Prophet, still smarting under his defeat at Tippecanoe in the previous November, led to the expedition against the fort.

The first signs of the presence of the enemy were the exchange of signals between them, the calls resembling the gobbling of a turkey. The ears of the sentinels, trained to distinguish such signals, detected the presence of the Indians and the beat of drums soon called the men to arms.

Two member of the garrison, the brothers Boyle, rash and adventurous men, volunteered to make a reconnaissance to ascertain, if possible, the strength of the enemy. They ventured forth, but never returned, the sound of four shots shortly after telling their fate. The lateness of the hour prevented a search for the young men, but next morning their bodies were found horribly scalped and mutilated.

ALARMS OF WAR

Circumstances proved that Captain Taylor's precautions were very timely for about eleven o'clock that night the garrison was aroused by the sound of firearms and once again the drum-beat summoned the men to their posts. The commandant, who had just arisen from a sick bed, where he had been confined by the prevailing fever, immediately sprang up ready to confront the enemy.

It was discovered that the savages had fired the lower block-house which contained the store of the army contractor. A fire under ordinary circumstances would have been a trying affliction to the little band in the fort; but surrounded as they were by furious enemies eager for their blood, the situation became appalling. Great consternation prevailed, during which two of the best men in the garrison leaped over the pickets, preferring possible death at the hands of the Indians to the terrible fate which seemed certainly to await them.

But great as was the peril of the garrison, the brave heart of the commandant was undaunted and he at once set to work to subdue the fire. The night was so dark that the savages had crept up to the blockhouse, although it was occupied as an alarm post, and set it on fire in several places. The flames communicated to some whiskey in the stores and were soon apparently beyond control. The scenes that ensued must certainly have gladdened the hearts of the savages, and their discordant yells, added to the raging fire and the cries of the women and children, were enough to sicken the bravest heart in the garrison.

Captain Taylor, with great presence of mind, ordered men upon the roof of the barracks to tear away the burning portion. The

smallness of the effective number of men in the garrison rendered it exceedingly dangerous to detail soldiers to carry water from the well to quench the flames, and the offer of the brave women to perform this duty was gladly accepted. The roof was torn off in the midst of a shower of bullets with the loss of but one man killed and two wounded; and this, with the heroic efforts of the women, stayed the progress of the fire and infused new courage into the hearts of the despondent soldiers. They set to work to repair the damages and before daybreak had erected a temporary barricade across the gap in the stockade.

It would be difficult to conceive of a more hazardous undertaking than this, the men being subjected to a heavy fire of bullets and showers of barbed arrows. Yet the work was done under the personal direction of Captain Taylor and from the shelter of the barracks the garrison returned the fire of the savages with such effect as to compel them to retire at six o'clock, after a constant assault of seven hours. Unsuccessful in their attempt to capture the fort, the Indians displayed their devilish ingenuity by driving together all the horses and hogs belonging to the garrison and the citizens, and shot them in their sight, while they drove off all the cattle belonging to the fort, amounting to seventy or more.

Disheartened by the failure of their attack the Indians made no further effort to capture the fort, although they remained in the neighborhood for a day or two, finally retreating toward the White river, committing many depredations along their route.

EIGHT FALL IN CLASH

The loss of the garrison during the attack was but eight killed and wounded. The Indians numbered 450, sufficiently strong to bury

their dead or carry them away; for this reason their loss was never ascertained, although it must have been very heavy. For many years after the battle it was not an unusual event for bones of the buried warriors to be turned up by the plow, or protrude from the banks of the river, brought to sight by the washing of the waters.

The troubles of the garrison did not end, however with the disappearance of the Indians, for, having lost their stores and stock, they were compelled to subsist on green corn. Captain Taylor attempted to send intelligence to Governor Harrison at Vincennes, but the two men he dispatched were intercepted by the Indians and compelled to return. His orderly sergeant and another man were then dispatched through the woods and finally, after many hardships and narrow escapes, reached the old post with intelligence of the situation of the garrison at Fort Harrison, which was soon relieved by a large force of Kentucky volunteers.

Taylor was promoted to the rank of brevet-major for his gallant defense of the fort, the first instance of that order of promotion. He continued to rise in the army and after his distinguished service in the Mexican war, was elected to the presidency. The founder of the fort preceded him in the presidential chair.

After Taylor gave up the command of Fort Harrison, Major Sturges, of the regulars, was in charge of the post until 1816; he was succeeded by Major John Chunn, who had been in command of Fort Knox, at Vincennes. Dr. Benjamine F. Swafford, who spent his boyhood in the neighborhood of the old fort, and who was replete with interesting facts concerning it, had in his possession the original order by which Major Chunn was transferred from Fort Knox to Fort Harrison.

A REVERED SPOT

MAJOR Chunn remained in command of the post until 1819, when he was transferred to Detroit. He afterwards returned to the fort and was in command of it from some time in 1821 until it was dismantled by order of the government in 1822. He lived in the vicinity of Terre Haute until his death, which occurred in 1847. The old block-house remained nearly intact until 1849. It was later dismantled and some of the old logs were utilized in the building of the house which stood on the site and was long occupied by the family of the late Cornelius Smock.

On the evening of May 7, 1895, Colonel W. E. McLean in presenting a painting of Fort Harrison, painted by Walter Sies to the city council of Terre Haute, said:

"An edifice, it is true, of primitive structure and rough design, it served nevertheless, in its day a grand and noble purpose.

"It's history is not only important, it is a glorious one, for it played a splendid part, as an agency for good, in the early settlement, not only of our own state, but of all the first great republics west of the Alleghanies; not only as a military post; but as a haven of refuge for our fathers while conquering the wilderness and the savage.

"It ought to be a source of pardonable pride to every citizen of Terre Haute that within the confines of our state there is no spot richer in historic incident; no spot around which cluster memories more inspiring, memories fraught with greater events, than that spot three miles north of Wabash avenue, where once stood the old fortress so faithfully pictured on this canvas. Under its shadow, and under its protecting arms, the little struggling frontier

settlement which is now our beautiful and prosperous city, smiled into being.

"Puffed up and inflated as we may be by our greatness as a city, by our present prosperity and more than all, by the many evidences of our phenomenal prospects of future growth and progress, we ought not to forget our humble beginning. We ought rather to be proud that this city, now the center of culture and refinement, as well as of commerce and trade, was once the center of what was then emphatically 'the wild and woolly west.'"

From: David Lewis
To: Jim Gilson
Date: 10/9/2006 2:27:11 PM
Subject: Re: Fwd: Elks

Jim:

I talked to Amy about 75 mins. ago and told her that the "ruins" at Fort Harrison probably date back to 1910-1920. The Elks may have built them. They are made of poured concrete, about 25ft in dia., and once had conical roofs with prominent brackets supporting the roof but these are now very deteriorated. The north boathouse doesn't have any roof at all! There were 2 of them situated about 50ft apart on the banks of the Wabash about 200 ft south of where Ft. Harrison used to stand until c. 1822.

They were probably used as picnic shelters-gazebo-boathouses (during the winter months). In the WWI era pleasure boating was very popular on the Wabash during the the Summer months. Below them (on the banks) is the remains of a very short rail line that would allow larger boats to be launched directly into the Wabash at that point. At one time several years ago the twin boathouses were "adorned" with graffiti. Much of the graffiti is gone now. Since they are concrete, they will probably remain there as "ruins" for some time unless dynamited and hauled away.

David